Time and Effort Reporting Process

Overview

In this chapter

The following topics are covered in this chapter:

Introduction

The time and effort reporting process is the means by which each Laboratory employee reports attendance and absence time for the week and charges effort for the week to the appropriate program code/cost account/work package. Input and approval of time and effort is accomplished through an automated data processing procedure.

The time and effort reporting process provides for weekly distribution of costs to programs, which includes the identification of individual employee effort to individual program accounts.

Background

Time and effort reporting replaces the biweekly attendance report, the monthly effort report, and the monthly Form B process. The biweekly distribution of paychecks and direct deposit remain the same.

The new process is a significant change from previous practices. The purpose of this document is to provide the requirements of the process and possible options to help organizations with its implementation.

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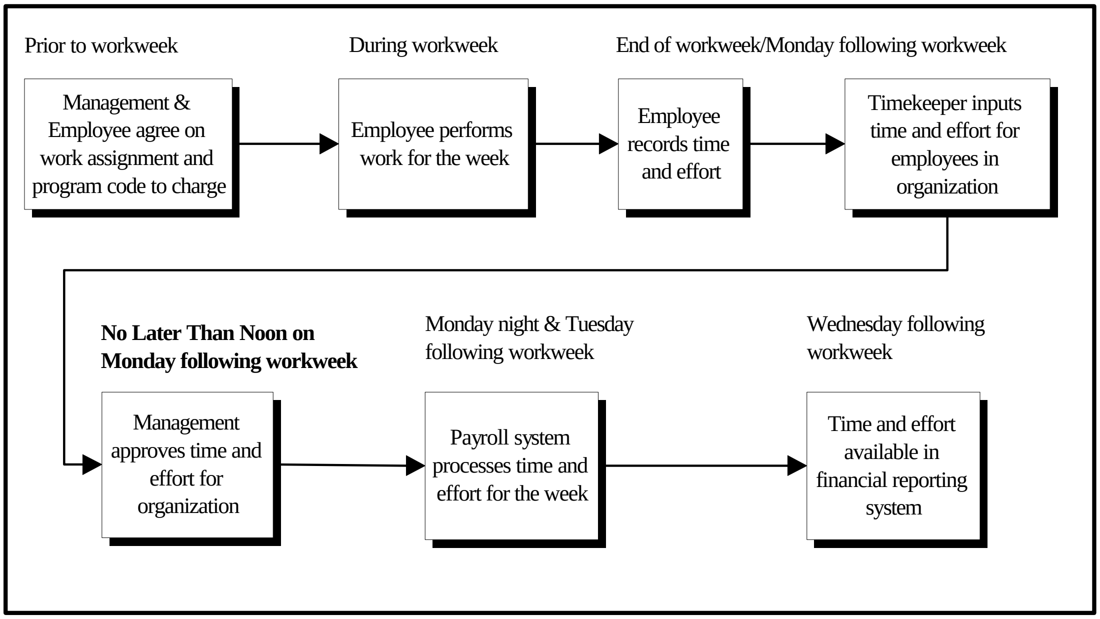
Overview, Continued

Process overview

The time and effort reporting process is a weekly cycle driven by critical input deadlines as shown in the chart below.



Definitions

Definitions

The following terms are found in this chapter:

- **Allocation** refers to the process of authorizing funds to an internal organization(s) for a specific work activity.
- **Compensated time** refers to the time for which an exempt employee will be paid, not necessarily for all time worked.
- **Default hours** are the hours that will be processed for an employee whose time and effort report input is not received by the Payroll Team by noon on the Monday following the workweek. These hours are based on the employee’s pay status at straight time and must be corrected during the next time and effort reporting cycle.
- **LANL Home Page** is the starting point for the Laboratory’s official presence on the Internet’s World-Wide Web, which is specifically devoted to Los Alamos National Laboratory information. For assistance, contact Laboratory-Wide Systems at 7-9444 or 5-3377.
- **Overtime** is time worked by a non-exempt employee in excess of 40 hours per week.
- **Post-period corrections** are those corrections that are made after the Monday noon approval deadline for the pay period requiring the corrections.
- **Program code/cost account/work package status** is the financial status of a program code (e.g., open, closed, pending closed).
- **Suspense program code** refers to the program code under the organization’s cost center to which default hours will be charged for an employee with missing payroll input after the input deadline.
- **Termination** is a situation in which an employee leaves the Laboratory’s employment, either voluntarily or involuntarily.
- **Uncompensated time** refers to time that was worked for which an exempt employee will not be paid (e.g., in excess of 40 hours for a full-time, exempt employee).

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibilities

Understanding the roles and responsibilities of each entity involved in the process is essential to the successful execution of the process.

Role	Responsibilities
Line management	• Assign staff to projects. • Communicate assignments and program codes to staff. • Authorize and approve leave/absences per Laboratory policies. • Approve and certify time and effort reported by employees. • Ensure program codes are open and charges to same are authorized. • Establish organizational guidelines for submitting time and effort reports. • Delegate appropriate authorities in the Time and Effort (TE) System. • Initiate and approve post-period corrections, if necessary. • Communicate problems and concerns to program customers.
UC employees	• Perform work as assigned and agreed upon with line management. • Secure appropriate authorizations for leave benefits from management. • Report attendance/absence per Laboratory policies. • Identify where effort was expended by charging compensated time worked to appropriate program code(s). • Submit weekly time and effort reports per schedule and method established by line management. • Attest to the accuracy of both attendance and effort reported by signing weekly time and effort report (signature can be electronic). • Initiate post-period corrections, if necessary, by submitting revised input to the timekeeper.

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Roles and Responsibilities, Continued

Responsibilities (continued)

Role	Responsibility
Program management	• Negotiate work scope and resource requirements with line management. • Communicate allocations to line management. • Distribute allocations in timely manner. • Establish new program codes and notify line management of program code closures.
Timekeepers	• Enter time and effort reports into the TE System. • Correct errors per organization's procedures. • Run exception report to validate input. • Notify authorized approver when input is ready. • Maintain organization's time and effort files. • Enter post-period corrections into the TE System. • Run the Current Time Exception Report. • Notify authorized approver when corrections are ready for approval. • Enter time for terminating employees on the day of the termination, allowing enough time for approval before 10 a.m.
Payroll Team	• Process weekly time and effort reports. • Ensure labor costs are distributed to reported program codes. • Process the biweekly payroll. • Maintain the TE System, policies, and procedures. • Support management, employees, and timekeepers.
Program financial analysts	• Communicate financial status/changes to program managers and organization financial analysts. • Communicate program code status changes to organization financial analysts. • Maintain program code/cost account/work package tables within the financial system.
Organization financial analysts	• Communicate funding status and program code status to line management. • Provide program code definitions and relationships to line management and staff.

New Policies

Introduction

The time and effort reporting process is driven by existing Laboratory policies (refer to Section 300 of the Laboratory *Administrative Manual*). However, several new policies are necessary. The Laboratory Administrative Manual is being updated to reflect these changes.

Job Classification	Policy
Exempt Employees (as defined in the Fair Labor Standards Act)	• Record time in one-hour increments. **Note:** For exempt employees, the unit of measure for distribution of cost is one-hour increments. The use of hours should not be construed to be the basis for calculating exempt employee pay. • Account for time and effort on a 40-hour per week salary basis or the equivalent percent of full-time appointed if not a full-time employee. • Record leave or absences in accordance with Laboratory policies. • Record effort against direct programs before effort against indirect programs. • A program CANNOT be charged more hours than were actually worked on that program. • If total hours for the week are less than 40, absences of two hours or less must be reported using the Discretionary Absence code.
Nonexempt Employees (as defined in the Fair Labor Standards Act)	• Record time in 15-minute increments, and record all time worked and all absences per existing Laboratory policies. **Note:** Overtime is reported using time code **R** (regular) or appropriate shift code; the system will calculate overtime based on hours reported.

Time and Effort (TE) System

Access

The TE System is an IBM mainframe-based application accessible through the IB menu in the administrative partition of Laboratory-Wide Systems. The requirements to access the system are available through Laboratory-Wide Systems Support at 7-9444. Instructions for signing on and signing off the TE System are included in the Time and Effort System How to Record Time and Effort for Laboratory Employees and How to Approve Time and Effort for Laboratory Employees Reference Cards; refer to the Reference Cards Access information on page 22.

Menus

The TE System primarily uses three menus: the Current Time menu, which is used to process ongoing weekly time and effort input; the Previous Time menu, which is used for all correction subsequent to the current week; and the Termination Processing menu, which is used to process employee terminations.

Time code changes

Concurrent with the implementation of time and effort reporting, several time code changes have been implemented. Some changes are driven by hourly reporting, while others are driven by requirements to support other recent Laboratory policy changes, e.g., the Family Medical Leave Act. The updated time code listing, including a brief description of appropriate usage, is provided in the Time and Effort System Time Codes Reference Card; refer to the Reference Cards Access information on page 22.

Current Time Reporting

Introduction

The TE System allows for the generation of blank timesheets for distribution to the employees within an organization. Use of the system-generated timesheet is not required; however, it is recommended because the system-generated blank timesheet will include the program code/cost account/work package numbers that were used by the employee the previous week, as well as the current vacation and sick leave balances for the employee. If an organization chooses to use the system-generated blank timesheets, the timekeeper generates them and distributes them to the employees in the organization. It is recommended that timesheets be distributed by Tuesday of the current week.

Organization

The organization can select from a variety of means for employees to submit their time; however, the organization must ensure that all required data for input into the TE System is included in the option selected. Such options include:

- Using the system-generated blank timesheets;
- Submitting time and effort reports through electronic mail;
- Establishing a standard timesheet and submittal schedule on an electronic network; or
- Creating a customized hardcopy timesheet.

Warning: Attendance data has been determined to be sensitive data. Organizations should ensure that appropriate password protections and User-ID/password combinations exist when using electronic timesheets. Systems such as the World-Wide-Web should not to be used, because such systems are open systems that do not contain appropriate security measures.

Employee

On Friday of the current week or on Monday morning following the current week, the employee completes and submits the timesheet to the timekeeper. The employee must sign the timesheet to attest to the accuracy of both the attendance and effort reported. If hardcopy timesheets are used, the signature is handwritten. If electronic timesheets are used, the User-ID constitutes the signature.

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Current Time Reporting, Continued

Timekeeper

The timekeeper can input employee time and effort reports as individual timesheets are received or once all of the timesheets have been received. Input cannot occur prior to 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday of the current week. It is anticipated most input will not occur until Friday of the current week or Monday morning following the current week. The timekeeper logs into the TE System to enter the current week's time and effort for the employees. Each organization should establish a protocol for timekeepers to follow in the event that a timesheet is not received from an employee.

Note: Hands-on training for timekeepers and approvers is available. Contact Laboratory-Wide Systems Support at 7-9444 to schedule the training.

Group management

Existing Laboratory policy restricts approval of time and effort reporting to group-level management and above (i.e., group leader, deputy group leader, or acting group leader). For large, geographically dispersed groups, the group leader can accomplish the approval process in the same manner as performance appraisals, wherein team leaders can complete the detailed review of the time and effort report and recommend approval to the group-level manager. The group-level manager may then approve the time and effort report. Such a procedure may include a requirement that the team leader "sign" the timesheet. Such a signature would indicate the team leader had reviewed the time and effort report, but the signature would not constitute official approval.

Error Messages

Errors

The TE System includes several on-line edit functions to validate data input. If data input falls outside the parameters of these edits, error messages are generated. The system will not allow the timekeeper to proceed without resolving the error. The timekeeper may choose to move to the next employee's report to continue input and defer resolving the error until a later time. The following table identifies on-line error messages and provides descriptions of error conditions.

If you get an error message stating . . .	Then . . .	And you will need to . . .
Type one of the screen action or row action codes,	No entry was made at • The <Q>uery or <N>ext (screen action) field or • The AUD (row action) field.	• Enter **Q** to move down the screen or **N** to move to the next employee record or • Enter one of the following codes: **A** = add **U** = update **D** = delete
ROW ACTION CODE is in error,	An invalid entry was input in the AUD (row action) field.	Enter **A**, **U**, or **D**.

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Error Messages, Continued

Errors (continued)

If you get an error message stating . . .	Then . . .	And you will need to . . .
TIME CODE required. Press <F4> for valid selections,	No time code has been entered.	Enter a valid time code; refer to page 22 for Reference Cards Access information.
Time code is not valid for employee's classification; F4 for valid list,	• The time code entered is not a valid time code or • The time code entered is not valid for this employee, based on the employee's job classification.	• Enter a valid time code or • Verify which codes are valid for the employee's classification and enter a valid code.
Hours required for classification have been exceeded,	• The total hours exceed those authorized by policy, e.g., blood drive, or that are available for the employee, e.g., sick leave, or • The total hours exceed 40 hours for an exempt employee not on extended workweek or are in excess of the total number of authorized hours per week for an exempt employee on extended workweek.	• Verify the hours authorized by policy or that activity or the hours available for that employee in the TE System or • Enter 40 or less hours for an exempt employee not on extended workweek, or enter less than the total number of authorized hours per week for an exempt employee on an extended workweek.

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Error Messages, Continued

Errors (continued)

If you get an error message stating . . . **Note:** These errors can occur individually or in combination.	**Then . . .**	**And you will need to . . .**
PROGRAM CODE NOT FOUND,	The program code input is not a valid number in the financial system.	Verify and enter a valid program code.
PROGRAM CODE IS INACTIVE,	The program code that was input is inactive, pending inactive, or closed.	Verify and enter a valid program code.
PROG CODE/COST ACCT COMBINATION NOT FOUND,	The combination of program code and cost account input is not a valid number combination.	Verify and enter a valid combination of program code and cost account.
PROG CODE/COST ACCT COMBINATION INACTIVE,	The combination of program code and cost account input is inactive, pending inactive, or closed.	Verify and enter a valid combination of program code and cost account.
PROG CODE/COST ACCT/ WORK PCKG COMBINATION NOT FOUND,	The combination of program code/cost account/work package input is not a valid number combination in the System.	Verify and enter a valid combination of program code/cost account/work package.
PROG CODE/COST ACCT/ WORK PCKG COMBINATION INACTIVE,	The combination of program code/cost account/work package input is inactive, pending inactive, or closed.	Verify and enter a valid combination of program code/cost account/work package.

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Error Messages, Continued

Errors (continued)

If you get an error message stating . . .	Then . . .	And you will need to . . .
VOUCHER ID NOT FOUND,	Incorrect input has occurred.	Enter • **ES**, for ES&H activities or • Leave the field blank, which means the V-ID field is not being used.
You cannot enter hours for this time code on days one through five,	Hours were input on a weekday (Monday through Friday) using a weekend (Saturday or Sunday) time code.	Enter only time codes that are valid on weekdays.
You cannot enter hours for this time code on days six and seven,	Hours were input on a weekend day using a weekday time code.	Enter only time codes that are valid on weekends.

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Error Messages, Continued

Errors (continued)

If you get an error message stating . . .	Then . . .	And you will need to . . .
HOURS-DAY-X must be a number between 0 and 24, **Note:** X is a day of the week, 1 through 7.	The hours input for an individual employee exceed 24 hours on that day of the week.	Enter less than 24 hours for that day.

Error corrections

Should an on-line error occur, the timekeeper should compare actual input against the employee's timesheet to confirm the input matches the data recorded on the timesheet. If the input does not match the recorded data (e.g., a transposition error), the timekeeper can re-enter the data. If actual input matches the recorded data, the timekeeper should follow the organization's established procedure for correction of on-line errors.

Exception Report and Approval

Current Time Exception Report

For the data to be approved, a Current Time Exception Report must be run by the timekeeper or the approver to provide a final system review of the data for errors. If no errors are present, the approver can review and approve the time and effort for the organization. If errors exist, the timekeeper/approver would follow the organization's established error correction process.

The only errors that can then occur relate to program code/cost account/work package numbers. If, subsequent to the initial input of effort against a program code/cost account/work package number, the status of the number changes from open to pending closure, inactive, or closed, an error message will be issued.

Manager's review/ approval

Once all data has been input into the TE System without on-line errors and the timekeeper has confirmed that all employees are included, the data is ready for review and approval by the manager. Approval of time and effort in the TE System **MUST BE COMPLETED BY NOON ON THE MONDAY FOLLOWING THE WORKWEEK**.

Once the time and effort for an organization has been approved in the TE System, the weekly reporting process for the current week's time is complete. Timesheets and supporting documentation are to be filed by the organization. The minimum retention period for time and effort records is three years.

Approval options

One option would be for the manager to delegate the on-line approval authority to someone in the organization. It is assumed that the actual approval authority for the organization's time and effort would be retained by the approving official.

Note: It is recommended that the organization establish formal policies and procedures stating that the employee authorized to execute the on-line approval is not allowed to complete the on-line approval unless provided with appropriate documentation confirming approval of the time and effort by the group-level or above manager.

Missing Input

Missing input procedures

The TE System includes two backup procedures if all time and effort for a group is not in the TE System and approved by noon on the Monday following the workweek.

Where . . .	**Then . . .**
Time and effort for all employees in the organization has been input, but not approved,	• The TE System will process the input with a **P** flag indicating "pending approval" and • The Payroll Team will provide notification to the cognizant manager that input was processed without approval. **Note:** It is strongly recommended that approvals be documented.
Input is missing for one or more employees in the organization,	• The TE System will proceed with processing input for those employees accounted for in the system and • The System will generate default hours for the week for those employees' reports with missing data, based on each employee's pay status at straight-time only, which excludes overtime and other premiums. **Note:** The time and effort will be charged to a unique Laboratory-wide suspense program code under the organization's cost center code. If charges incurred in the Laboratory-wide suspense account are not cleared within thirty days, the charges will be transferred to the organization's support or G&A account, whichever is appropriate.

It is the responsibility of management to follow-up with the review, correction, and approval of the time and effort that was processed pending approval or using the default hours scenario.

Corrections and Terminations

Corrections

The corrections process is handled through the Previous Time menu and is similar to the Current Time Reporting process. A correction occurs when errors are discovered or needed changes are identified after time and effort reports have been processed. Either an employee or a manager can initiate a correction.

The initiator submits a correction request to the timekeeper. The request can be a marked-up timesheet, memo, e-mail, or phone call. The request should be documented. Given the requirement that employees “sign” original input and managers “approve” original input, it is recommended that managers notify employees when managers initiate a correction.

The timekeeper proceeds with input of the correction by following the instructions in the Time and Effort System, Time Input Reference Card (refer to the Reference Cards Access information on page 22). The edits for corrections are the same as those identified in Current Time Reporting, above. The process for reviewing and approving corrections is similar to that for the Current Time Reporting process and is identified in the Time and Effort System, Time Input Reference Card. There is no specific deadline for approval of corrections; the system will process only those corrections that are approved within the System when the weekly payroll is run.

Terminations

Terminations are isolated as a separate process in the TE System under the Termination Processing menu because timing of input, error corrections, and approval are critical. The Time and Effort System, Time Input Reference Card provides the steps required for processing terminations.

APPROVALS MUST BE COMPLETED BY 10 a.m. ON THE DAY OF TERMINATION in order for the terminating employee to receive the paycheck and/or send the electronic funds transfer file to the bank or produce earnings statements by the end of the day.

Contacts

Resources

Business Operations Division recognizes the move to weekly time and effort reporting is a dramatic change for the Laboratory. The following resources are available to assist with questions or problems:

Topic	Contact	Phone Number
Time and Effort Reporting Process/Time Code Usage	BUS-1 Payroll Team	7-4594
Attendance Policies	HR Policy and Communication Office	7-1647
Systems Problems	Laboratory-Wide Systems Support	7-9444
Effort Reporting (charging to program codes)	BUS-3, Financial Planning and Analysis	7-8517

Reference Cards Access

Introduction

Four reference cards were developed as part of the TE System training offered in June and July of 1995. Now they are also available on-line. The four reference cards are: Policies and Roles and Responsibilities, Time Codes, How to Approve Time and Effort for Laboratory Employees, and How to Record Time and Effort for Laboratory Employees.

How to access

Follow the steps in the table below to access the TE Reference Cards.

Step	Action
1	Log onto Netscape, Mosaic, or the Los Alamos National Laboratory Home Page (LANL) and scroll to *Info by Subject*. For assistance, contact Lab-Wide Systems at 7-9444.
2	Highlight *Info by Subject* by clicking the mouse button once. The System will move to the *Info by Subject* page. Scroll down to *Software Documentation*.
3	Highlight *Software Documentation* by clicking the mouse button once. The System will move to the *Documentation* page. Select *Business Information Systems Documentation* by clicking the mouse button once.
4	The System will move to the *Systems Documentation* page. Highlight *Lab-Wide Systems User Guides* by clicking the mouse button once. The System will move to the *Lab-wide Systems User Guides and Quick Reference Cards* page.
5	Scroll down to *TE* and click on the blue dot associated with the appropriate reference card. These cards may be printed by selecting the *Print* option under *File* from the menu bar.
6	To exit, highlight the *Exit* option under *File* from the menu bar.